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DEPARTMENT OF STATE (FEDDO/MR)

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DATE 5/10/89

Washington D.C. 20520



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Authority to: OADB  
The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: EA - Marshall

Reviewed by: Elyan Kelly Jr

Green Date: 4-27-89

SUBJECT: How to Deal with the Question of a Higher-Level Meeting with the Chinese - ACTION MEMORANDUM

DISCUSSION:

Now that we have had two meetings in Warsaw we are faced with two questions: (1) Should we agree to move to higher-level discussions with the Chinese in Peking or Washington, and (2) if so on what conditions?

In the memorandum "US Strategy in Current Sino-US Talks", which we prepared prior to the last Warsaw meeting and which you sent to the President February 7, 1970, (Summary at Tab B) we described our objectives as being to find some way, either explicitly or implicitly, to put the issue of Taiwan to one side and to attempt to move on to improve Sino-US relations in other areas, e.g., agreement on non-use of force, trade, exchange of visitors, etc. We noted that

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For this reason, we suggested that a meeting in Peking or Washington should only come after progress at the Ambassadorial-level talks in Warsaw.

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In approving the instructions for Ambassador Stoessel's use at the February 20, 1970 meeting with the Chinese, I understand that the President indicated he did not wish to appear to be pulling back from our original suggestion that we would consider a "higher-level" meeting.

At the February 20 meeting the Chinese indicated that they wished to move on directly to a "higher-level" meeting in Peking. The issue now, therefore, is whether to adhere to our original plan to agree to such a meeting only if it became clear that something concrete and to our advantage might emerge from it, or to accept a "higher-level" meeting without such clarification.

I am attaching for your information and for transmittal to the President two additional memoranda, on the advantages and disadvantages of a "higher-level" meeting in general (Tab C), and on the tactical considerations of how we should handle the question of our response to the Chinese at the upcoming Warsaw meeting (Tab D).

A "higher-level" meeting between the US and the PRC would be a major international event receiving the widest public attention and with substantial international and domestic political effects.

I do not think that we yet have a sufficiently clear idea of what to expect from the Chinese Communists in such a meeting to justify our immediately accepting their offer to receive a US representative. At the same time, if there is any chance that such a meeting might contribute to unfreezing our relationships with Peking, we do not want to lose the opportunity it may offer. I believe, therefore, that at the next Ambassadorial level meeting, we should reaffirm our willingness to consider a "higher-level" meeting, but emphasize our belief that, in order to ensure a proper basis for such a meeting, possible areas of mutual understanding on Taiwan, or at least the areas where both sides are clearly going to have to "agree to disagree," should be further explored at the Ambassadorial-level.

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In doing this we would review the positions we set forth relating to Taiwan at the last two meetings and the positions set forth by the Chinese. We would indicate our view that a plausible basis for discussion could be found in our mutual acceptance of the following principles: (1) Disputes relating to Taiwan should be resolved peacefully between those parties on the mainland and on Taiwan which are directly concerned; (2) The US will not interfere in such a settlement; (3) As tensions relating to the area diminish, the US military presence in the Taiwan area will be gradually reduced; (4) The US and the PRC will resolve disputes which arise between them through peaceful negotiations; (5) It is desirable from the standpoint of both sides to expand mutual contacts and trade; and (6) The principles of peaceful coexistence are consistent with the foregoing positions. We would then attempt to see whether the Chinese would be prepared to take these elements as the basis for further discussions and, if not, at what critical points our differences will focus.

At the same time, we can see whether the Chinese may be willing to make some gesture of "good will" in terms of action on prisoners, travel, or some analogous issue in order to set the stage for a "higher-level" meeting.

This approach is designed to test Chinese intentions, to see how strongly they want a "higher-level" meeting, and to find out what price, if any, they may be willing to pay for it. If, as I suspect will be the case, the Chinese stonewall for several meetings on both Taiwan and other bilateral issues and insist that a "higher-level" meeting is the only place in which to discuss substance, we will then have to decide whether to continue to maintain our position that we must have some prior progress in Warsaw, to shift our position and agree to go to Peking or invite the Chinese to come here. In the meantime, we will have had a better basis from which to prepare our positions for a "higher-level" meeting should it be decided that is desirable.

Since we are scheduled to make the opening statement at the next meeting, and since it is unlikely that the Chinese are now planning to do more than listen to what we have to say and then reiterate their past positions, I believe we should provide Peking with some advance warning of the general approach we plan to take. Our object is to avoid losing a

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month in our dialogue by making sure that the Chinese statement at the next meeting will have been prepared with foreknowledge of the general approach we intend to take.

I, therefore, attach a letter from Ambassador Stoessel to Chinese Charge Lei Yang proposing March 19 as the date for the next meeting and indicating our wish to discuss further in Warsaw the basis for mutually acceptable discussions at a "higher-level" meeting prior to setting a date for it (Tab E).

The attached memorandum to the President (Tab A) sets forth an analysis of the current situation and recommends that the President approve our approach and the draft letter to the Chinese Charge.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve and sign the memorandum to the President.

Attachments:

- Tab A - Memorandum for the President
- Tab B - US Strategy in Current Sino-US Talks
- Tab C - A Higher-Level Sino-US Meeting in Peking
- Tab D - Tactical Factors Relating to our Response to the Chinese on a Move
- Tab E - Draft letter

Clearances:

EUR - Mr. Swank *ES*  
EA - Ambassador Brown  
EA/ROC - Mr. Shoemith *PS*

EA:ACA:PHKreischer *MR*

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: A Higher-Level Meeting with the Chinese

At the February 20, 1970 meeting in Warsaw with the Chinese, they offered to receive a US representative in Peking. This was in response to our offer at the January 20 meeting to consider such a "higher-level" meeting after our talks progressed in Warsaw and was consistent with their independent suggestion at the January meeting that our talks might be conducted at a higher level or elsewhere than in Warsaw.

In the Strategy Memorandum enclosed with my February 7, 1970 memorandum to you on the Sino-US talks, I suggested that

we should agree to such a meeting only after there were signs in the Ambassadorial-level talks that a higher-level meeting would be productive. I enclose two additional memoranda: on the general advantages and disadvantages of a higher-level meeting, and on tactical considerations in handling the question of our response to the Chinese at the next Warsaw meeting.

A higher-level meeting with the Chinese, either in Peking or here, would be a major international event, receiving the widest public attention and with widespread and substantial international and domestic political effects. It is one of the few things that the Chinese want from us just now. I do not think that we yet have a sufficiently

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- Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to C FADRC
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- Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by S/S

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clear idea of what to expect from the Chinese at such a meeting to justify our playing our major card by immediate acceptance of their proposal. At the same time, if there is any chance that such a meeting might help unfreeze our relationships with Peking, we do not want to lose the opportunity which might be offered.

I believe, therefore, that at the next meeting, which I suggest we propose for March 19, we should reaffirm that we are prepared to consider a higher-level meeting but emphasize that in order to ensure a proper basis for such a meeting, the possible areas of mutual understanding, or at least those areas where both sides are clearly going to have to "agree to disagree", should be further developed at the Ambassadorial level.

In doing this we would review the positions we set forth relating to Taiwan at the last two meetings and the positions set forth by the Chinese. We would indicate our view that a plausible basis for discussion could be found in our mutual acceptance of the following principles: (1) disputes relating to Taiwan should be resolved peacefully between those parties on the mainland and on Taiwan which are directly concerned; (2) The US will not interfere in such a settlement; (3) As tensions relating to the area diminish, the US military presence in the Taiwan area will be gradually reduced; (4) The US and the PRC will resolve disputes which arise between them through peaceful negotiations; (5) It is desirable from the standpoint of both sides to expand mutual contacts and trade; and (6) The principles of peaceful coexistence are consistent with the foregoing positions. We would then attempt to see whether the Chinese would be prepared to take these elements as the basis for further discussions and, if not, at what critical points our differences will focus.

At the same time, we can see whether the Chinese may be willing: (a) to make some gesture of "good will" in terms of action on prisoners, travel, or some analogous issue in order to set the stage for a higher-level meeting; or (b) to indicate that they will make such a gesture at the time of such a meeting.

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The Chinese may well refuse to discuss substantive matters in terms going beyond those they have already used at the last two meetings and insist that a higher-level meeting is the only place to advance our conversations. It may take several meetings before it becomes clear whether this Chinese position is subject to change. If they remain adamant, we would then have to decide whether to continue to insist on prior progress in Warsaw, or to agree to go to Peking, or invite the Chinese to come here. Our initial approach, however, will have given us an opportunity to test Chinese intentions further, to see how strongly they want a higher-level meeting, and to find out whether they may be prepared to pay some price for it.

Since we anticipate that the Chinese now are preparing only to hear our response to their February 20 proposal, in order to elicit some reaction from them at the next meeting I believe it is necessary to provide them with advance warning of the general approach we plan to take. This, at least, will ensure that their response at that time will have been made in the foreknowledge of our own attitude and will give us a faster read-back on Chinese attitudes.

I am, therefore, also enclosing for your approval a letter from Ambassador Stoessel to the Chinese Charge, proposing March 19 for the next meeting and indicating our wish to discuss further in Warsaw the basis for mutually acceptable discussions at a higher level.

William P. Rogers

William P. Rogers

**Enclosures:**

A Higher-Level Sino-US  
Meeting in Peking.

Tactical Factors Relating  
to our Response to the  
Chinese on a Move

Draft letter

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## US STRATEGY IN CURRENT SINO-US TALKS

### SUMMARY

Our objective in negotiating with the Chinese is to reduce Sino-US tensions and the risks of conflict, to indicate to the Soviets our willingness to deal even-handedly with Peking as well as Moscow, to develop bilateral relations--contacts, trade, disarmament discussions, to encourage domestic Chinese advocates of a peaceful foreign policy in Peking, and ultimately to move toward normal diplomatic relations. We seek to achieve these objectives without adversely affecting our own security, our negotiations with the Soviet Union, or the vital interests of our allies.

The Chinese share our interests in avoiding war and wish to demonstrate to the Soviets that they have other avenues open to them in their diplomacy and international relations than concessions to Moscow. In addition, they wish to see whether the US may be prepared to shift its position on Taiwan and may wish to explore certain bilateral issues such as trade.

But we cannot yet assume that Peking in its negotiations with us is motivated by any desire for a genuine long-term improvement in Sino-US relations or that it will alter or negotiate on its broad revolutionary goals. While this attitude could gradually shift as our talks develop and if we make progress, current Chinese interest in easing political and military pressures on their eastern flank in order more effectively to negotiate with the Soviets probably provides the main negotiating impetus behind Peking's approaches.

Taiwan has been the main stumbling block to progress in all past discussions with the Chinese.

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Our initial negotiating approach should be to try and find a way of doing this so that we can move on to discuss other bilateral issues, beginning perhaps with trade.

Later in the discussion, we may have to decide two key questions:

(a) Are we prepared to accept that Taiwan and the mainland are parts of "one China"?

the PRC and the GRC maintain that Taiwan is part of "one China." Peking's sensitivity regarding "territorial integrity" may prompt the Chinese to continue to insist on an explicit statement that Taiwan is part of China. For the 136th meeting and possibly in subsequent meetings,

But eventually we may have to decide whether we can agree to this position without seriously adversely affecting our relations with and the international position of the GRC, as a price of gaining Peking's acceptance of non-use of force in the Taiwan area, acceptance of our own special relationship with the GRC and the prospect of progress on other bilateral issues.

(b) How far are we prepared to go in gradually reducing our actual military presence on Taiwan? Peking, for whom the US military presence on Taiwan is related to the Peaceful Coexistence principle of "non-interference in internal affairs," may be willing to accept a statement of US intent to withdraw gradually from Taiwan if this is accompanied in the relatively near future by some symbolic removals. Bearing in mind the increase during the Viet-Nam war of our forces

and facilities on Taiwan (including an increase from about 1,000 to 10,000 military personnel between 1964 and the present), we may need to consider this overall question in the context of our desire for Peking's commitment not to use force against Taiwan, together with the probable impact on the GRC and our own military requirements.

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This strategy would prompt the PRC to press for moving the Sino-US discussions to Peking or Washington. We should therefore continue to attach to such a change the condition spelled out at the 135th meeting: that this move should come only after progress at the Ambassadorial-level talks in Warsaw.

If the PRC agrees to discuss a formula regarding Taiwan, we should be prepared to discuss further developments frankly with the GRC.

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### A Higher-Level Sino-US Meeting in Peking

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We told the Chinese Communists in January that, as progress was made in the Ambassadorial talks in Warsaw, we would be willing to consider sending a special representative to Peking or having a Chinese representative come to Washington to develop our discussions further. The Chinese independently suggested that the talks might be conducted "at a higher level or through other channels." In February the Chinese offered to receive a "ministerial-level" or "special presidential" envoy in Peking and emphasized that the fundamental problems in Sino-US relations--primarily Taiwan--could only be dealt with satisfactorily at a higher-level meeting.

Why do the Chinese want a meeting?

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What are the advantages for the US in such a meeting?

The potential advantages for the US in moving out of 20 years of stalemate and hostility with Peking and reaching some understandings which will enable us to put the Taiwan issue aside and go on to discuss further relaxation of Sino-US and general Asian tensions and improvement of Sino-US bilateral relations are clear. There are, however, certain advantages for the US in the simple convening of higher-level meeting in Peking whether such a meeting results in any substantive negotiated agreements or not:

-- holding of talks will underline in boldface the new flexible US policy approach to Asian policy and problems, and dramatize the possibility of a change in Sino-US relations;

-- so long as Sino-US talks do not break off abruptly and with clear mutual condemnation by both sides, the willingness of the US to deal equally with the Soviets and the Chinese will be emphasized and Soviet uncertainty as to the state of play in Sino-US relations will be increased;

-- reception of a senior US official and negotiations with the US in Peking would undermine the PRC's image as the unfailing revolutionary antagonist of the US and possibly weaken its influence on radical and revolutionary elements in the US and elsewhere;

-- talks with the US would have a possible divisive effect on Peking's relations with North Viet-Nam and North Korea;

-- Sino-US negotiations in Peking could contribute to paving the way for Chinese participation in a broader conference on Southeast Asia, if this appeared desirable and likely in the future;

-- US Chinese negotiations could contribute to the strengthening of "moderates" within the Peking leadership, although a stalemating of the talks on substantive issues might eventually reduce this impact.

-- the opening of discussions in Peking conceivably could create an opportunity for us, if we wished to do so, to establish a continuing US presence on the Chinese mainland by retaining a skeleton negotiating team in Peking.

-- the opening of talks may create the possibility for obtaining access to Peking for US correspondents and for direct access to Americans being held in prison by the Chinese. Even should substantive talks not succeed, it may be possible to continue access by journalists.

What are the disadvantages for the US in such a meeting?

The weight of the disadvantages of a meeting in Peking varies in accordance with whether or not a reasonable basis exists for reaching substantive agreements. The disadvantages are also in part mirror images of some of the advantages of such a meeting. The one disadvantage which sums up all the sub-disadvantages is that the likelihood of success in achieving a genuine improvement in Sino-US relations through a higher-level meeting is small, the probability that the Chinese are interested in talks primarily for their impact on the Soviets is great, and the unsettling and potentially damaging impact on some of our friends and allies and their assessment of our China policy is substantial. The principal specific negative considerations are:

-- Strong GRC Reaction The GRC almost certainly would regard the sending of a high-level representative to Peking as a grave challenge to its claim to be the only legitimate government of China, a matter which it regards as a vital national interest. It might be possible to moderate the GRC reaction by informing them in advance of our intentions and keeping them apprised of the progress of the talks. However, we would have to anticipate the strongest possible protest from President Chiang and a demand that we discuss nothing relating to the future of Taiwan without GRC concurrence. The

GRC has already made a formal protest to us along these lines. It is possible that the GRC might attempt to pressure us to reverse our decision by inspiring anti-American demonstrations and, if we inform them prior to Vice Premier Chiang's visit, by cancelling that visit. It is unlikely, however, that the GRC reaction would affect our access to bases and facilities on Taiwan.

-- Effect on Chirep Issue in UN Our negotiations with the PRC in Peking, particularly if continuing during the UNGA session, will increase the interest of a number of countries in some change in the status quo which will open the way for admission of the PRC. The immediate result is not likely to be majority support for an Albanian-type resolution expelling the GRC. Great uncertainty and diminished US influence in the new situation are, however, likely to result, along with increased pressure for some new resolution calling for the admission of Peking to the UN system. We would have to devise new tactics to deal with this situation. Nevertheless, it is possible that no tactics could prevent a GRC withdrawal if they were confronted by passage of a resolution accepting Peking into the UN.

-- Soviet Concerns:

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-- Reaction of Key US Allies: (a) General: A high-level meeting, regardless of how we attempt to qualify our expectations, could over-dramatize the prospects for major changes in Sino-US relations when we still do not know whether any positive results will actually come from such a meeting. This could lead other countries to over-react, to set changes in their own policy toward Peking and the GRC in motion before it is clear whether in fact there is likely to be any shift in US-PRC relations.

(b) Japan -- Providing we inform the Japanese in advance and consult with them systematically on the progress of our discussions with the Chinese, we anticipate no major adverse effect on US-Japanese relations although there will be Japanese concern over the future of Taiwan and GOJ relations with the GRC. We should anticipate that the Japanese will attempt to keep pace with us and will make further attempts to develop similar arenas for official discussion with Peking. We do not expect Tokyo to move beyond where we may be on substantive issues with Peking.

(c) ANZUS -- The Australian and New Zealand reaction will be similar to that of Japan. Domestic debate in these two countries on the question of recognition of Peking may be intensified but we do not anticipate any sudden changes in policy or that US relations with either country will be adversely affected.

(d) Republic of Korea, Republic of Viet-Nam, Thailand, Laos -- There will be heightened concern in these four countries that US support for them will diminish to the extent our relations with Peking appear to improve. This can, in part, be eased by appropriate reassurances but we can anticipate a general increase in their nervousness over US intentions. Thailand and Laos, but not the GVN or ROK, may make private--and possibly public--overtures to Peking to discuss improved relations.

(e) Philippines and Indonesia -- Sino-US talks in Peking may favorably affect some of the anti-US criticism from the "left" in the Philippines at the same time that it



increases somewhat Philippine uncertainty as to the US security commitment. The Philippine Government may renew its earlier public expressions of willingness to improve relations with Peking and take some concrete action to send its own high-level representative to the mainland. Already existing Indonesian interest in restoring normal PRC-GOI relations will be further accelerated. US relations with neither country are likely to suffer.

-- General International Reaction: Sino-US negotiations in Peking may accelerate efforts by Italy and Canada to negotiate agreement with Peking on recognition and the establishment of relations. Belgium, Luxembourg, and Iceland may be impelled to begin similar steps. India will be concerned on the one hand that the US may be less willing to support it in its "confrontation" with Peking but may also renew the efforts it has made in the last year or more to improve its own relations with the Chinese. Some of the Latin American countries may also begin more actively to discuss the possibility of developing their relations with Peking.

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Tactical Factors Relating to our Response to the  
Chinese on a Move from Warsaw to Peking

There are five alternative approaches we can take in responding to the Chinese on a higher-level meeting in Peking:

1) Accept for some period in May-July (i.e. after Chiang Ching-kuo's visit to the US and before the timing becomes too close to the UN General Assembly session in September), subject to agreement on the modalities of a meeting (assurances of protection and immunities for US representatives, communication facilities, freedom of entrance and departure from the mainland, etc.), level of representation, and the broad terms of reference of the meeting;

2) Accept in principle for some unspecified date contingent upon agreement on modalities in (1) above and further exploration in Warsaw of the basic issues which we would pursue further in Peking in an effort to assess more accurately the prospect for any tangible progress and results from a Peking meeting;

3) Accept in principle for some unspecified date and, in addition to exploring the basic questions in (1) and (2) above, attempt to obtain Chinese agreement to some prior concessions (prisoners, journalists, trade, etc.);

4) Defer a final decision and inform the Chinese that our decision will be based on further discussion in Warsaw on the substantive issues under consideration;

5) Inform the Chinese that we are willing to have a higher level meeting but prefer to hold it in Washington rather than Peking.

Discussion:

We believe PRC agreement on modalities to be a minimum prerequisite to our final agreement to a meeting. The basic questions affecting other aspects of alternatives (1)-(4) above are: (a) whether the Chinese will be willing to discuss any substantive matters at all in Warsaw now that the issue of a higher-level meeting has been tabled, and (b) whether they are prepared to pay any advance price for our agreement to such a meeting. Alternative (5) is essentially a delaying tactic in which argument and debate over whether to meet in Peking or Washington would become a justification for keeping our options open while we pressed to see what other changes we could elicit in Chinese policies through meetings in Warsaw. The advantages

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and disadvantages posed in a separate memorandum for a higher-level meeting in Peking are essentially the same for such a meeting in Washington. In addition to the symbolic gain for the PRC of having the US, like the Soviets, go to Peking, the only significant difference may be that, because of the greater press and publicity which would attend a Chinese delegation's visit to the US, and the proximity to the UN, the political impact on Chinese representation and on the GRC would probably be even greater than that described in the memorandum.

A further general factor is that initial talks with the Chinese either in Peking or Washington would be "exploratory"--a formulation both we and the Chinese have now used. That is, they would serve to identify how far our positions were apart and where possible areas of understanding might be found rather than to specifically negotiate an agreement.

Will the Chinese be prepared to discuss substantive issues at Warsaw now that the issue of a higher-level meeting has been tabled?

We believe they will not. Having said formally at the February 20 meeting that "certain difficulties" prevent the fundamental issues in Sino-US relations, particularly Taiwan, from being more thoroughly explored at the Ambassadorial talks, it is most unlikely that they will soon shift that position. Since they appear to wish a meeting in Peking, it is possible that under pressure the Chinese may offer further "bait" for us in the form of hints of flexibility in their position. We believe, however, that these hints will continue to be sufficiently ambiguous that we will not know how far--or in what direction--the Chinese are really prepared to go.

Favoring our pressing in Warsaw for clear indications that real results would be achieved at a higher-level meeting before playing our major card of agreeing to such a meeting:

(a) our initial suggestion that we would consider a higher-level meeting was related to "progress" at the Ambassadorial-level and immediate agreement to the Chinese proposal could appear as a change in our original position;

(b) immediate acceptance of the Chinese proposal may appear "over-eager," might cause the Chinese to believe we were prepared to make more fundamental policy changes than is the case, and could lead the Chinese tactically to take a more rigid line in opening negotiations in Peking than might otherwise be the case;

(c) unless we are able to obtain further elaboration and refinement of the Chinese positions, we may find ourselves entering talks in Peking on Peking's terms, with much less knowledge of areas of possible give and negotiation in the Chinese position than we would like to have, with little ability to assess accurately in advance the prospects for the discussions, with less leverage than desirable toward achieving progress after we arrive in Peking;

(d) even if the Chinese are not willing to discuss Taiwan or major changes on issues such as trade, travel, and prisoners, their interest in a higher-level meeting may lead them to agree--if pressed--to some symbolic changes, including allowing correspondents to come to Peking with any US delegation, release of one American prisoner, or provision of information about the fate of US airmen currently listed only as "missing" in the China area. While appearing small, such movement may have some domestic US political value in conjunction with proceeding with the meeting and would, in fact, represent from Peking's point of view quite a significant change in past Chinese political positions.

Favoring our agreement to a higher-level meeting without prior progress on specific issues:

(a) looking 6-18 months into the future, circumstances may be far less propitious than they are now for holding such a meeting: -- (i) if Sino-Soviet talks break off in Peking, Soviet reaction to a higher-level meeting convened subsequently may be considerably greater than at present; -- (ii) a higher-level meeting with the Chinese which convened just as the General Assembly was meeting would probably considerably complicate both the Chinese representation problems and the anguish of the Republic of China, outlined in the accompanying memorandum on a higher-level meeting. Thus, if we decide to bargain for more than a month or two before agreement, we would have to anticipate a decision that we should wait at least until the beginning of 1971 before reaching any final conclusion on whether to convene a higher-level meeting; -- (iii) domestic political complexities in Peking may lead Peking to harden its posture in Warsaw as "radicals" could argue that the US is "delaying," pulling back and replaying the tactics of 1955-56 and that any expectation of useful negotiations with the US is visionary. The result might be an even harder Chinese posture if we were eventually to meet, or the adoption by the Chinese of tactics or propaganda intentionally designed to make a higher-level meeting more difficult or even impossible.

(b) the Chinese could at some point surface the fact that we had expressed our willingness to consider such a meeting and that Peking had then agreed. Unless we at that point

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accepted--and conceivably the timing could then be much less desirable than now from our viewpoint--such a Chinese move would result in most of the disadvantages of an actual meeting in Peking with few if any of the advantages.

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